

STATIONS

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I.

I am free this bar this me this little man and a drink just for a minute
free I blow a kiss to two boys across the room a lark I am not 5'2" not
105 lbs but that's OK because I am a girl the world is mine and why
shouldn't they love me? for once I am just like everyone on TV
nothing complicated nothing difficult I can laugh and play and flirt
and I'm free to fuck free to drink free to sit on your lap free to brush
your hair away from your sweet forehead free to hear you whisper in
my ear dance with me you beautiful boy take me and protect me
you are my true daddy man for once my life is just like my father's my
mother's my best girlfriend who is dating a guy on the football team
my cousin who is getting married next March and just bought a house
with a big kitchen where she bakes muffins I will bake muffins too for
that big-eyed boy across the bar I bat my eyes and I swear he bats his
eyes back and says *Look at the man!* god he's flirting with me his
buddy the guy sitting next to him says something *that boy's cute that
boy can be mine* he invites me over and buys me a drink maybe this
night will make a thousand and one nights the best of my life say good
morning and good night

II.

I get in the truck between them two tall boys and my cock is hard I close my eyes and they pull my legs apart with hands as strong as my father's hands a road the hum of a motor a home a little laugh a radio a song You're jacked boy perhaps they forgot my name's not Jack C'mon boy Stop dreaming You're jacked We're not gay when I open my eyes the road is dark and quiet I notice the gun against my knee We're not gay Who did you think we were? ah c'mon tell me you guys aren't gay so what was that dance across the floor at the bar? I want to think clearly but my words fall slow motion out of my mouth the tequila still too strong wherever we are there's still time I'll find my way home maybe you guys could just let me out

III.

I thought I learned this lesson once thought I could stop them but they were too strong and the bartender punched me the others took me out back and held me down taking turns I said to myself *not next time* funny how I can remember now but for the life of me couldn't think backwards for the police when I needed to everyone drinks at twenty-two it's not a big deal everyone does crazy things who really cares? there's a long life ahead what's a few bruises and one rape?

IV.

I pretend the truck is a cradle the ride is long and my mother talks to me in my sleep My son she says How could you be in trouble again? I wanted to protect you from your father from the police from the person you thought loved you most My son wake up isn't that liquor I smell on your breath? Just like when you were a boy I want you to wake up now but my son if you don't I do love you know that my son don't you know that?

V.

And now my best boyfriend is here but the truck is still moving and look I think I've passed out I tell my friend that these guys are good you know they're good and I'll tell you more about it tomorrow like what a good fuck what a good laugh what fabulous stomach muscles what incredible eyes don't worry it will be OK they're the best just stop the truck for a second I want to get out and tell you how much I love you

VI.

Who the hell is waking me up? someone is wiping my face hey it's a girl there are four of us now and the truck is still moving they are silent but they're still pulling my legs apart the girl says They want your wallet boy they want my wallet sure take the goddamn wallet sure what's your name look you guys You shut up look you guys it's not funny who the fuck are you? Shut up you faggot one of them hits me on the head with the gun it's a real gun and it hurts fuck look I didn't mean anything look don't hit me again I'll give you what you want yes you can have my wallet I'll blow you how 'bout that? no don't laugh it's OK you're straight I respect that I didn't mean anything just let me go just let me out Hey guys did you hear that? He says it's OK we're straight He's giving us permission You little faggot It's NOT OK you're gay Get that? We kill faggots We kill them so go fuck yourself not us We're going to make sure of that you faggot you fuck now get out of the truck

VII.

They push me out after the girl and someone hits me again I fall on the ground the cold don't hit me don't but they do and I can't see I think I'm screaming my head splits open it's not the plan to die out here take my wallet take my keys my address is shit I can't remember my address I think it's with my mom and dad in the desert Don't hit him so hard the girl says Don't kill him

VIII.

Girl you should worry about your children not me these men will tear out their hearts and they will destroy you it's not me but your children it's not me it's you

IX.

You can't beat a dead mule that's what I thought but it's not true because I pass out my face in the dirt the dry weeds the last thing I see the brilliant god and look there's some green in the blood look the rose look we are all dancing

X.

My stained shirt a white banner in the night sky the long nose of a boy
and a cigarette I can't remember his name but his hand and the
cigarette fall to my belly the girl says Don't hurt him the boy says Shut
up the burn takes me back to the cold I say stop in French then Arabic
I can't remember my English but they can't hear me anyway if only I
had waited in the desert the sands the heat three camels and poppy
seed cake lemonade and baklava these red flares

XI.

They lift me up and stretch me so the skin tears across my armpits
they tie me to the fence my head too heavy so maybe they think I'm
dead at least nothing hurts anymore I want something to drink
please give me something to drink my arms want to come together to
hold the night

XII.

Where is anyone in Wyoming? where is my father who said the best years of his life were spent on this land? where is my mother? the desert where the sand blows away the wind? the blood freezes on my cheeks the dark then the sunrise orange and red the sky above the dunes it must be Jerusalem there are birds my hands reach up to the clouds let my lover let my people let the world the sun right above me now the road still there a few cows walk up to the fence come a little closer I say you look warm Mom why won't the cows climb on top of me? I want to say goodbye Dad don't be angry I'm still your son the wind has stopped and what the fuck I thought I'd like this dream two strong men who carry me into the wilderness and tie me to a fence they could have loved me cow please come closer I need you

XIII.

They said I wasn't heavy at all a little bag of bones and skin hanging off a fence they said they almost passed me by in the dim light of late afternoon they said it could have been a farmer's trick a scarecrow left over from the summer fields and the greedy crows they said it was the hair that gave me away it didn't make sense too real and too blond I wish they had said a quiet hello but they shouted Quick someone's dead on the fence they said here they were biking they said it was getting dark they said Look and they ran

XIV.

I know everyone meant well but it just wasn't worth coming back I tried for awhile but my head kept caving in and always there was the butt of a gun the hot flare of a cigarette the retching in the dead dark-stained earth I could no longer see my friends or understand their words my mother flew up to help me and the earth inside was rich and warm enough for me to say goodbye to say fear for your children to say some will hate some will love some will be heroes and some will be light itself I climbed a ladder that began in the night sky and opened into the dawn there I saw brilliance and rising heat it was desire after all it was life